

## PART I - FACE SHEET

<b>APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE</b>		1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION: Application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Construction	
Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to conform to the Corporation's eGrants System)			
2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS):		3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE:  18-JAN-11	STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:
2b. APPLICATION ID:  11AC125278		4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY:	FEDERAL IDENTIFIER:  09ACHMA0010006
<b>5. APPLICATION INFORMATION</b>			
LEGAL NAME: Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust  DUNS NUMBER: 828375451		NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes):  NAME: Dee Robbins  TELEPHONE NUMBER: (978) 833-4192  FAX NUMBER:  INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: robbins@mountgrace.org	
ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county): 1461 Old Keene Road Athol MA 01331 - 9734 County: Worcester			
6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN):  042938967		7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: 7a. Non-Profit  7b.	
8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box).  <input type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONTINUATION <input type="checkbox"/> AMENDMENT If Amendment, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es): <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>  A. AUGMENTATION            B. BUDGET REVISION  C. NO COST EXTENSION    D. OTHER (specify below):		9. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY: <b>Corporation for National and Community Service</b>	
10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER:94.006 10b. TITLE: AmeriCorps State		11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT: Massachusetts Lands Initiative for Tomorrow (MassLIFT)	
12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc): Bristol, Franklin, Hampshire, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, Worcester		11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):	
13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 09/12/11      END DATE: 08/24/12		14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant <input type="text" value="MA 001"/> b.Program <input type="text" value="MA 001"/>	
15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #: <input type="text" value="2"/>		16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS?	
a. FEDERAL	\$ 260,000.00	<input type="checkbox"/> YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON:  DATE:  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO. PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372	
b. APPLICANT	\$ 361,785.00		
c. STATE	\$ 0.00		
d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00		
e. OTHER	\$ 0.00		
f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00		
g. TOTAL	\$ 621,785.00		
17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO			
18. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION/PREAPPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT, THE DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DULY AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT WILL COMPLY WITH THE ATTACHED ASSURANCES IF THE ASSISTANCE IS AWARDED.			
a. TYPED NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: Dee Robbins		b. TITLE: Program Manager	c. TELEPHONE NUMBER: (978) 833-4192
d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:			e. DATE SIGNED: 05/04/11

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### Executive Summary

Executive Summary: The Massachusetts Land Initiative for Tomorrow (MassLIFT), is a collaborative effort of regional land trusts and conservation groups to meet critical community needs for land protection. AmeriCorps members participating in this program strengthen the capacity of MassLIFT partners and the 200 + communities we serve to initiate new land conservation projects, monitor and manage protected lands, expand local interest in conservation, and engage young people in conservation-based service learning.

### Rationale and Approach

#### A1. Land Protection -- A Compelling Community Need

The AmeriCorps Massachusetts Lands Project will engage members in service with local and regional land conservation organizations to meet critical community needs for land protection. The project will (1) increase institutional capacity at regional, municipal, and local land boards and groups; (2) provide members with the skills to carry out conservation projects; (3) foster an ethic of community service and civic engagement in members and community volunteers; (4) increase local support for and participation in land protection; and (5) contribute to protection and stewardship of farms, forests, wildlife habitats, watershed areas, community gardens, and parks. Collectively, these activities will increase the amount of protected land in the areas served, resulting in healthier and more productive communities, a greater quality of life for current and future residents, a life-enhancing service experience for members, and a more engaged and service-oriented citizenry.

Land protection contributes to communities' physical, economic, biological, and social health.

Conservation lands help to maintain air quality, mitigate global climate change, protect water supplies, and support a diverse regional economy that includes forest products, agriculture, recreation, and tourism. Protected woodlands, farms, fields, and wetlands support native wildlife and provide natural beauty. Parks and community gardens provide opportunities for recreation and serenity amidst the bustle of daily life, adding to the quality of life for residents statewide.

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### EVIDENCE OF NEED

Massachusetts is a densely populated state. Development has been expanding rapidly from cities and suburbs into rural areas. Massachusetts Audubon Society's "Losing Ground" reports (1987, 1999, 2003, 2009) examined data on building permits, land use, and natural resources to document rates and patterns of development and habitat loss. Land fragmentation, degradation, market forces that work against local timber production and small-scale agriculture, high land prices, and development pressures threaten environmental quality and healthy communities.

1.5 million acres of land need conservation protection in Massachusetts. State agencies document this need in comprehensive plans for Greenway Connections, Statewide Land Conservation, Wildlife Conservation, & Outdoor Recreation (MA Exec. Office of Envir. Affairs [EOEA] 2002, 2002, 2005, 2006), and in evaluations of critical habitats ("Biomap," "Living Waters," MA Natural Heritage Endangered Species Program [NHESP] 2001, 2007). Academic and NGO studies documenting the need to protect the state's farms, forests, and other open spaces include: American Farmland Trust's "Farms for the Future" report (2008); Harvard Forest's "Wildlands & Woodlands" report (2005), and Open Space Institute's "Western MA: Assessing the Conservation Opportunity" report (2005). Most cities and towns identify lands of local conservation interest in their 5-year Open Space & Recreation Plans. Overall, less than 10% of the state's remaining farmland is protected and less than 40% of the land that needs protection from development has received it.

### NECESSARY ACTIONS

(1) Important lands need legal protection from development. Towns, the state, federal agencies, or conservation organizations can purchase land. Private owners can place Conservation Restrictions (CRs) or Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APRs) on land to ensure that it will continue to be used for farming, forestry, or wildlife habitat in perpetuity, while remaining privately owned. Government or conservation organizations hold these restrictions and ensure that they are obeyed.

Most land parcels are small and privately owned. Massachusetts has more than 7,500 farms, averaging

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67 acres in size (USDA 2009), and tens of thousands of private forest parcels (Prof. D. B. Kittredge, UMass-Amherst). Protecting land means working with many landowners, each with their own financial and conservation goals. It involves citizens and local government. And, it requires support from funders and others. Hundreds of hours of communication, negotiation, meetings, and planning go into each land conservation deed recorded at Registries of Deeds.

(2) Once land is set aside from development, stewardship is needed ("Land Trust Standards & Practices," Land Trust Alliance 2002). Baseline documentation contributes to management plans and lets changes be identified over time. Monitoring and management ensure that natural resources are protected, trails are maintained, boundaries are respected, and deed restrictions on permitted uses are honored. Stewardship monitoring is also a legal obligation of the holder of a CR, to ensure protection of the purposes of the CR in perpetuity. IRS requirements and oversight of conservation lands have become more rigorous. Many local land trusts are struggling to conduct baseline documentation and ongoing surveys, because they have few staff or are all-volunteer and lack the expertise.

(3) Without public support, the first two needs cannot be met. Reports cited above emphasize this need. "Massachusetts Environmental Education Plan" (MA EOE and Dept. of Education 2002) notes links between environmental awareness and "choices regarding community preservation, protecting open space and biodiversity, watershed management and protecting water quality, and other resource management issues." A recent assessment of land conservation in western MA identifies broad support among landowners, the public, and government officials as the #1 need (Land Trust Alliance 2006). Massachusetts has lagged behind the rest of the country in wildlife-related recreation (US Fish & Wildlife Service 2007). Trends in outdoor activities are thought to reflect decreases in the extent to which children know about nature and spend time in natural areas ("Children and the Outdoors: State Policy Solutions Guide," Allen Cooper, National Wildlife Federation, 2008; "Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder," Richard Louv, Algonquin Books, 2008). Engaging children and families in outdoor activities can gain public support for conservation, help youth to value

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nature, and show people how land protection benefits society.

The protection of working farms and woodlands depends on public support and also on markets for locally grown crops and forest projects. "There is wide agreement that a public connection with and commitment to local agriculture systems has been critical to the success of Massachusetts farms" (UMass Extension Bulletin, Fall, 2009).

Massachusetts has a strong history of land protection and environmental education. At least 120 land trusts are based here -- 1/9 of those nationwide -- and they have protected more than 400,000 acres ("The Land Trust Movement in America," Richard Brewer 2004, Dartmouth Univ. Press). Regional land trusts work collaboratively with woodland councils, local land-protection committees, municipal boards, and smaller land trusts, and they are particularly effective at working with landowners and community members to identify and implement key conservation projects (Open Space Institute 2005).

Due to limited funding and personnel, land trusts and volunteer town boards are unable to follow up on all the potential projects that might be implemented, carry out all stewardship responsibilities, or reach out to the public. Engaging more volunteers in these activities is key to increased land protection success.

### REGIONAL NEEDS

The AmeriCorps Massachusetts Lands Project focuses on areas served by seven regional land conservation organizations. The partnership and organizations are described in Sect. D. This section documents regional needs.

The reports cited above and focused local studies identify needs in the regions served by the partners. Most reports do not list individual land parcels, both because parcels and owners change rapidly, and because doing so would result in land speculation and drive up prices, making it even harder to meet conservation goals. Land trusts and other local conservation organizations use maps, GIS (Geographic Information System: computerized information on critical natural resources, protected lands, parcel locations and owners), and other criteria to identify priority lands for protection, and then work one-on-

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one with landowners to help them pursue conservation options for their lands.

The regions served include the state's top 5 agricultural counties, producing 70% of state crops (USDA 2009); most farms are unprotected (reports above; MA Dept. of Food & Agriculture). All regions have towns with watering restrictions due to summer water shortages; municipalities with boil orders or other violations of drinking water standards; and surface waters that do not meet water quality standards for sediment, oxygen, and/or nutrients (MA Dept. of Environ. Protection). Sprawl and decreases in open space threaten wildlife habitat, rare species, and aquatic life (reports above; MA Dept. of Fish & Game).

NORTH-CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS (Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust) --This region encompasses northern Worcester County and adjacent areas. Its eastern edge lies along the "sprawl frontier" described in the 2003 & 2009 "Losing Ground" reports, which identified development threats here as equal to or greater than areas closer to Boston.

Development, habitat fragmentation, roads, degradation of water resources, and habitat loss are occurring very rapidly. Massachusetts west of Worcester "is at a crossroads. The next 20 years will determine whether suburbanization expands in an unplanned manner, fragmenting rural landscapes and threatening the region's working farms and forests or whether western Massachusetts retains its rural identity, working landscapes, and distinct sense of place" (Open Space Institute 2005).

Using local Open Space Plans, MassGIS data, reports cited above, and the Quabbin to Cardigan Partnership's "Q2C Plan," Mount Grace and local partners have identified 76,000 acres, or about 15% of regional open space, in need of protection. 90 projects involving 8,000 acres are in process. Help is needed in identifying parcels, working with landowners, and facilitating project implementation. Tens of thousands of acres of conservation land need baseline documentation and/or ongoing monitoring (data from land trusts and municipal boards). Mount Grace alone holds CRs on almost 3,400 acres, all of which require regular monitoring and other stewardship.

PIONEER VALLEY (Franklin Land Trust, Kestrel Trust) -- The Connecticut River and its floodplain

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divide the western third of Massachusetts from the rest of the state. The northern half of the valley and adjacent hills are part of the Pioneer Valley, a region of small towns, farms, and forests with little urban development. It is another "sprawl danger zone" that is losing land rapidly to unplanned residential and commercial development ("Losing Ground" 2009, Open Space Institute 2005). Farmland is particularly at risk because flat, treeless, well-drained terrain is relatively easy to develop. According to "Agriculture in the Pioneer Valley," published by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), farmland in the region fell from 111,314 acres to 88,393 acres between 1987 and 2002, a 20.6 percent decline. Average farm size continues to decrease (USDA 2009).

The PVPC "Regional Greenways Plan" (2003) proposes a network of connected spaces in the region. The plan incorporates inputs from municipal Open Space, Master, Community Development, and Zoning plans; local land trusts; and state and federal land protection programs. It identifies actions to meet this goal and specifies target areas of particular conservation interest. FLT, Kestrel Trust, and local partners use this plan, MassGIS data, and local Open Space Plans to guide their activities. Half of the region's farmland and 75% of forest still needs protection. In the 9-town area served by Kestrel Trust, this amounts to more than 18,000 acres and hundreds of individual land parcels.

Local needs assessments by land trusts and towns also identify stewardship of protected parcels as a critical need (FLT and Kestrel Trust data, town Open Space Plans). FLT holds CRs on more than 6,000 acres and is working to implement baseline documentation and ongoing monitoring. Communities and state agencies need help with monitoring APRs on more than 4,000 acres in Kestrel Trust's service area. Despite the state's recognition of the importance of environmental education (MA Env. Education Plan 2002), most small towns have limited abilities to provide conservation-based educational programming. Local land trusts receive regular requests from schools (K-12 and college) for programs, but they lack staff and volunteers to respond (internal records of requests for programs from FLT, Kestrel Trust, and local conservation partners). The requests demonstrate a local need for outreach and education.

NASHUA RIVER WATERSHED (Nashua River Watershed Association) -- The Nashua River is a major

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tributary of the Merrimack River, one of the largest rivers in southern New England. It flows for 46 miles in Massachusetts and drains 454 square miles of land in the state. Because water quality and land protection are inextricably linked, NRWA has a long-range goal of establishing a Nashua River Greenway of protected land along the river and its tributaries. Substantial progress has been made but more is needed. "1995 to 2020 Vision for the Nashua River Watershed" (NRWA 1995), "Forest on the Edge" (US Forest Service 2005), and "Nashua River Greenway Assessment of Need" (MA Forest Legacy Program 2001) document the need and identify specific goals for completing the greenway. More than 90 miles of the Nashua River and tributaries have been protected, but more than half of the tributaries in the watershed's 22 sub-basins are not yet protected.

The "Losing Ground" "sprawl line" (2003, 2009 cited above) has moved across most of the watershed in the past decade and now lies at its western boundary. Pressures on land are acute. An estimated 5,500 acres of land in more than 6,000 parcels, including 12 miles and more than 2,000 acres of river shoreline, remain to be protected (NRWA data, town Open Space Plans, and MassGIS). The need to monitor CR lands is a critical, and inadequately met, need (data from NRWA, other land trusts, and local boards). Local partners need technical assistance, stewardship help, and volunteer training. Another need is for educational outreach, especially through service learning opportunities for youth. Much of the region's growth has involved families moving out from the high-cost Boston suburbs. Increased numbers of school-age children and needs for science education is evident throughout the region (Town Clerks' records of town meetings and school budgets, MA Env. Education Plan 2002).

SUDBURY, CONCORD, AND ASSABET RIVER WATERSHED (Sudbury Valley Trustees) -- The Concord River and its two major tributaries, the Sudbury and Assabet rivers, drain 377 square miles and flow through 36 Massachusetts towns west of metropolitan Boston. The watershed lies south and east of the Nashua River basin. This is one of the fastest growing areas of the state. Pressures on undeveloped lands are high. Specific land protection needs are documented in the 2000 "SuAsCo Biodiversity Plan" and "SVT Greenways Plan," and in a working map developed by SVT and partners identifying eight



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priority areas for land protection in the basin.

Existing land trust staff is fully engaged in efforts to identify interested landowners and to facilitate new land protection projects. Staff and volunteers are not adequate to meet the parallel needs for stewardship and public education and outreach. For example, baseline documentation is complete for 32 of SVT's 79 fee-owned reservations and for the 50 CRs that they hold. Help is needed to complete baseline documentations on reservations, to conduct annual monitoring, and to train volunteers so that they can assist with this ongoing responsibility in the future.

GREATER WORCESTER (Greater Worcester Land Trust) -- Worcester is the state's second-largest city. Located at the center of Worcester County, the city and surrounding towns have experienced dramatic growth since completion of Interstates 290 and 190 in the 1970s. Reports cited above, rare-species habitat maps prepared by MA NHESP, and local Open Space Plans document critical land protection needs for at least 90 parcels and 1500 acres in the region. A present focus has been along the Four Town Greenway Initiative connecting the towns of Holden, Worcester, Paxton and Leicester and centered on the "Cascades" complex of park, municipal, Trust, and private lands. This project involves the Leicester, Holden, and Worcester conservation commissions, and the Paxton, Common Ground, and White Oak land trusts. Because the primary focus of existing land trust staff and volunteers is on establishing initial protection of key parcels, stewardship of existing protected lands is an especially high priority for help in this region.

SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS (the Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Massachusetts) -- This region covers most of Bristol and Plymouth Counties and includes coastal and inland areas. Lands needing protection include more than 80,000 acres of core habitat of highest conservation priority; more than 400 parcels; and 80 miles of river shoreline including the recently federally designated Wild and Scenic Taunton River, the North and South Rivers, which are National Natural Landmarks, and their major tributaries (MA NHESP Biomap & Living Waters, MA Comprehensive Wildlife Plan, stewardship plans for Taunton and North Rivers, and Open Space Plans from 60 cities and towns).

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Wildlands Trust and local organizations are engaged in specific land protection projects, stewardship, and public outreach to the communities they serve. Land trust staff and volunteers are heavily engaged in implementing specific projects, and more help is needed. Stewardship and community outreach/technical assistance are equally important needs.

### A2. Proposed Project Activities & AmeriCorps Member Roles

The AmeriCorps Massachusetts Lands Project d(MassLIFT) will engage 20 full-time members in service with the seven partner organizations and, through them, with community groups and boards. Members will serve as Regional Conservationists (RC), Land Stewards (LS), Outreach Coordinators (OC), or Service learning Coordinators (SLC). The positions and activities are modeled on a successful pilot program carried out by Mount Grace in 2008-2010 with funding from the Massachusetts Commonwealth Corps program (see A6). Positions are distributed in relation to the regions' and partners' priority needs (see A1) and described more completely under Sect. C1.

### ADDED VALUE OF AMERICORPS GRANT FOR MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Each partner organization will host AmeriCorps members whose service will meet local and regional needs. No AmeriCorps members will duplicate or replace work carried out by partners' existing staff or volunteers. Instead, their service will increase organizational capacity and allow partners to meet critical land protection needs that they cannot address with existing levels of funding and staffing (see A1 and C1 for more details).

In addition to hosting members, five partners (Mount Grace, Kestrel Trust, NRWA, SVT, and Wildlands Trust) will also oversee members who will serve both the partners and other local land protection organizations without the staff and capabilities to administer programmatic and financial aspects of an AmeriCorps grant. The grant will thus increase capacity not only at the seven primary partners, but also at community organizations throughout the partners' service regions.

### SUPERVISION, MEMBER DEVELOPMENT, AND PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

Please see B2 for detailed discussion of member supervision, training, and development. Partners' staff

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conservation professionals will mentor and supervise AmeriCorps members in a one-on-one relationship. Member training and development will occur throughout the service year. It will include all-member Orientation in the first week of service, individualized instruction from supervisors and other staff, quarterly all-Corps meetings, and participation in a professional land trust conference. These professional development opportunities will provide information and develop members' skills related to their service responsibilities. Member Orientation will introduce AmeriCorps, community service, land protection needs and activities, the participating organizations, and the project, and it will provide technical training pertinent to members' service responsibilities. Our member development plan is designed to maximize the value of members' service in terms of both their individual learning and growth, and their ability to meet their service goals.

The introduction to AmeriCorps during member Orientation will include a discussion of prohibited activities. Supervisors will also review prohibited activities individually with members, to ensure there is no confusion and no potential for violations.

### A3. Measurable Outputs and Outcomes

Each year the project will (1) provide at least 40 service learning events and 30 public programs outdoors on the land; (2) initiate 45 new land conservation projects; (3) provide volunteer training and conduct baseline or monitoring surveys that will produce at least 112 stewardship reports; (4) facilitate at least 13 trail projects on conservation lands; (5) contribute to establishment or improvement of at least 5 community gardens; (6) provide technical assistance to at least 4 towns that are seeking to establish new agricultural commissions or open space committees, or to carry out the work of such committees; and (7) engage at least 1,800 community volunteers in a minimum of 8,000 hours of service.

The program will allow AmeriCorps members to develop skills that they can continue to use in service to their communities, wherever they find themselves in future, and will provide them with an increased sense of civic engagement in pursuit of shared conservation goals with fellow community residents.

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### EXAMPLES OF ALIGNED MEASURABLE OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

The Primary Service Category for this project (Attachment C) is Wildlife, Land & Vegetation Protection or Restoration. Logic Models and Performance Measures have been developed for key Needs and Service Activities, Member Outcomes, and Community Outcomes. Three examples follow.

(1) Land Stewardship Needs and Activities -- Outputs: To meet the community need for stewardship of protected lands, each year AmeriCorps members will complete 112 property surveys and stewardship reports providing baseline documentation or monitoring data. Instruments for measuring these outputs include member's activity logs of stewardship surveys conducted, and records of stewardship reports in files held by land trusts and other organizations responsible for conservation lands. Intermediate Outcome: Land trust stewardship files will document stewardship reports are completed in accordance with IRS Code 170 (h). End Outcomes: Ongoing effective monitoring and management will contribute to conservation of the important natural values of protected lands and the services such lands provide to society.

(2) Participant Development -- Activities: AmeriCorps members will receive training that will provide them with knowledge and skills to help municipal boards and local conservation organizations protect land, carry out stewardship, and provide outreach. Outputs: 100% of AmeriCorps members will receive at least 88 hours of training and professional development, including quarterly all-AmeriCorps meetings, and other training activities. Intermediate Outcomes: As a result of their service and training, 100% of members will have skills and knowledge that contribute to land protection, an ethic of community service, and satisfaction in their skills and accomplishments, as documented in performance reports from supervisors and by members' self-evaluations at mid-point and end of their service. End Outcome: After their AmeriCorps service, former members will continue to participate in community service and to contribute to conservation.

(3) Strengthening Communities -- Activities: AmeriCorps members will recruit volunteers from the community, provide volunteer training, facilitate volunteer participation in land stewardship and land

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protection, and encourage public enjoyment of open spaces. Outputs: AmeriCorps members will recruit at least 1,800 community volunteers who will contribute at least 8,000 hours of service. Intermediate Outcomes: 80% of volunteers recruited and trained by AmeriCorps members will express satisfaction with their service and feel they were adequately prepared to carry out their service activities. End Outcomes: More people have participated in volunteer service to conservation; more people understand natural systems and have skills needed for land protection and/or land stewardship; thanks to volunteers, local land trusts and cities and towns are better able to address their land protection needs and responsibilities; and conditions on conservation lands will be improved.

### A4. Plan for Self-Assessment and Improvement

(1) Mount Grace staff will lead weekly check-ins with all partners during the first month of the project to ensure that lessons learned and best practices will be used throughout member orientation and during the identification and initiation of member projects. (2) Monthly check-ins will occur after the first month, with one-on-one meetings between the supervisory staff at Mount Grace and partners as well as group meetings to discuss and address any new problems and solutions encountered. (3) A FAQs and help thread will be available on email for supervisory staff at partner organizations, and a second thread will be available for members. This will help ensure that any problems are identified promptly and addressed in a timely fashion. (4) Corps members will meet and exchange ideas with members serving with other partners at quarterly meetings, to provide esprit de corps and to identify specific needs to be addressed through the ongoing member training program. (5) Members and supervisors will attend the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition annual conference, which offers conservation-related training sessions and a chance to assess program goals and successes in the context of the work of analogous trusts. (6) Results from each year of the project, including problems and successes, will be incorporated into planning for the following year.

### A5. Community Involvement

Volunteers and community inputs are core components of the proposed project. Land protection

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planning and implementation in Massachusetts have long been closely tied to community needs and local inputs. Each partner in this proposal works closely with community residents to identify candidate land protection projects, using priorities identified in local Open Space & Recreation Plans, local knowledge of farms and other undeveloped lands, and contacts with individual landowners. Increased local involvement is key to the success of the proposed project. The involvement of volunteers from the community is pivotal for ensuring that parks and other publicly accessible lands are used and appreciated, and that protected lands are monitored and managed.

### A6. Relationship to Other National and Community Service Programs

Mount Grace received funding in 2008-2010 through the Massachusetts Commonwealth Corps, a state program similar to AmeriCorps, for capacity building in land conservation. The funding supported service by a full-time Regional Conservationist, a half-time-equivalent Land Steward, a full-time Community Outreach Coordinator, and a full-time Service Learning Coordinator. They served Mount Grace, the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership, and other community partners in protecting land, monitoring protected lands, providing public education and outreach to community groups, and connecting youth to nature through service learning programs. In the first year, Commonwealth Corps members more than doubled the number of public programs and generated more than a dozen new conservation project initiatives by Mount Grace and local collaborators. They generated more than 300 new volunteers who cleared trails, created and planted community gardens, and helped catalogue species on protected lands. Mount Grace expects ongoing civic engagement and conservation service by these volunteers throughout the community. In fall, 2009, the program started its second year with four new participants, whose service will continue and expand on the first year's accomplishments. In light of the dramatic increase in Mount Grace's ability to meet community conservation needs through the enhanced organizational capacity the Commonwealth Corps provided, Mount Grace initiated the AmeriCorps Massachusetts Lands Project.

The proposed project focuses explicitly on regional land trusts, in partnership with community

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organizations, protecting land, providing land stewardship, and increasing outreach. AmeriCorps projects nationally that deal with these three aspects of conservation through a variety of host sites include Huron Pines (MI), Project Conserve (NC), and Goodwill Industries Community Resource Corps (ME). Many community service programs focus on land stewardship, including trail creation and restoration, and/or education and outreach. AmeriCorps examples include State Parks programs in FL, MA, DE; Sierra Nevada AmeriCorps Partnership (CA and NV); Maine Conservation Corps; Inland Northwest Land Trust (WA); and Vermont Chapter of the Nature Conservancy. We hope to share experiences with and learn from these and similar programs.

### A7. Potential for Replication

The AmeriCorps Massachusetts Lands Project is an expansion -- or in a sense a replication -- of the Mount Grace program funded by MA Commonwealth Corps (see A6), on a larger scale and engaging multiple land protection organizations and more Corps members across a larger geographic area. The Land Trust Alliance, a national umbrella organization that provides land trusts with technical, administrative, and financial assistance, has expressed interest in applying the model beyond Massachusetts to a regional or national scale.

## Organizational Capability

### D1. Organizational Structure

As discussed above, this project involves seven partner organizations that are active in the service regions described in Sect. A1. Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust is the lead applicant and administrator.

MOUNT GRACE LAND CONSERVATION TRUST was incorporated in 1986 to protect significant natural, agricultural and scenic areas and to encourage land stewardship in North Central and Western Massachusetts for the benefit of the environment, the economy and future generations. Mount Grace serves 125,000 residents in 23 towns, has 950 members, and has protected more than 23,000 acres through more than 250 projects.

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These accomplishments, remarkable given small size and modest resources, reflect a focus on community collaboration and partnerships to achieve land conservation goals. For example, in the Quabbin Corridor Connection, a USDA Forest Legacy project, Mount Grace partnered with three local towns to protect 1,900 acres of forest. As a founder in 1997 of the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership (NQRLP), Mount Grace is part of a collaborative consortium of state and federal land protection agencies, regional land trusts, and small, largely volunteer-run local land trusts and conservation organizations with no paid staff. NQRLP has worked with more than 1,000 volunteers in the local communities; was influential in Mount Grace's growth from 2 to 11 staff; and will be a collaborator on the proposed project. Mount Grace offers monthly educational programs free to the public, including nature-based hikes and volunteer work days.

Mount Grace has a 15-member volunteer Board of Directors and 11 paid staff. Directors' expertise includes forestry and farming, public relations, carpentry, local activism, corporate litigation, venture capital, ecology, education, fundraising, local government, and the arts.

The AmeriCorps grant will involve 6 staff as member supervisors or administrators. Membership Coordinator David Kotker, who supervised the Outreach and Service Learning Coordinators funded by Commonwealth Corps, will supervise 2 AmeriCorps Outreach Coordinators and 2 Service Learning Coordinators who will serve with Mount Grace and local hosts. He has more than 10 years of environmental fund-raising experience. Stewardship Biologist Tom Wansleben will supervise 1 Land Steward who will serve Mount Grace and local hosts. He has a master's degree in conservation biology from Antioch University-New England. Partnership Coordinator Jay Rasku will supervise a Regional Conservationist. He has worked as an environmental organizer for 12 years. Director of Finance and Operations Sean Pollock, an AmeriCorps alumnus, will supervise the AmeriCorps Project Director. Office Manager Lisa Cormier will track Mount Grace's programmatic and financial activities. She has extensive experience in payroll, data management, and office efficiency in NGO and business settings. The Land Trust Alliance (LTA) will assist Mount Grace in hiring a qualified full-time staff person to



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administer the grant. The AmeriCorps Project Director will: (1) obtain monthly information from all partners on members' programmatic activities; (2) carry out all required financial administration; (3) coordinate with all of the partners to address technical, financial, programmatic, and administrative questions and to resolve problems; (4) schedule staff and member training; (5) provide additional supervision for members volunteering with smaller conservation groups, and (6) provide required financial and programmatic reports to MSA and AmeriCorps.

PARTNERS -- Six other regional conservation organizations are partnering with Mount Grace on this project, plus affiliated regional land trusts, watershed groups, and woodland councils. The primary partners are Kestrel Trust, Franklin Land Trust, Greater Worcester Land Trust, Nashua River Watershed Association, Sudbury Valley Trustees, and Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Massachusetts. Each partner meets the following criteria. (1) It is a regional organization and meets the AmeriCorps eligibility requirements for eligible bidders; (2) land conservation is its primary mission or, for watershed associations, a significant part of the organizational mission; (3) it has paid staff dedicated to land conservation; (4) it has a volunteer Board of Directors; (5) community volunteers are integral to its ability to accomplish its conservation mission; (6) it works closely with the communities it serves to identify and implement land conservation projects, and to further long-term conservation and management of land; (7) it collaborates actively and effectively with other community land conservation groups; (8) it has a strong track record of accomplishment in land conservation, including obtaining funding to support land acquisition projects and the organization's operations; (9) it has identified institutional-capacity needs that fit into the goals of the AmeriCorps Massachusetts Land Project of providing service opportunities to meet critical community needs in land conservation; and (10) through its programmatic activities, it has demonstrated a consistently high quality of program, innovation and creativity, effective use of limited resources, leadership, and ongoing community involvement and support.

KESTREL TRUST was founded in 1970 to protect forests, farms, mountains and rivers in the Pioneer

## Narratives

Valley of Western Massachusetts. Serving a 9-town area, they receive annual support from more than 800 local individuals, families, businesses, and organizations, including 12 dedicated volunteers. They work directly with towns, state agencies, and other land trusts to help secure public grants and private donations, including bargain sales, foundation grants, and gifts, in support of land conservation. To date, Kestrel and partners have protected more than 4,000 acres through direct acquisition, CRs, APRs, and transfers of lands into conservation ownership by municipalities and state agencies. The KT is also committed to expanding public understanding of broader environmental issues that affect local landscapes, by cosponsoring lectures by local experts, tours of lands at risk of being lost to development, and local festivals celebrating local lands and landscapes. Kestrel Trust has a 10-member volunteer Board of Directors and a part-time executive director, special projects director, office manager, mapmaker, and an attorney on retainer. Kristin DeBoer, Executive Director, will supervise one Regional Conservationist and one Land Steward, who will serve with KT and local hosts, and one Outreach Coordinator, and will track activities for reporting.

FRANKLIN LAND TRUST was incorporated in 1987 to protect farmland and forests and the rural character of the countryside in western Franklin County and nearby areas in the upper Pioneer Valley. Serving 26 towns, and supported by 600 members and more than 100 dedicated volunteers, FLT does not seek to own land but instead works with landowners to place private land under restrictions that will maintain ownership while saving land from unwanted development. To date, 250 properties amounting to more than 18,000 acres have been protected through APRs, CRs, limited projects that allow development of a small portion of farmland in exchange for protection of the rest, and creative divisions of property for sale to new conservation owners. FLT has a 15-member volunteer Board of Directors and a staff of 8. Alain Peteroy, Director of Land Conservation, will supervise 1 Land Steward and track land stewardship activities. Director of Development Mary Lynn Sabourin will supervise 1 Service Learning Coordinator and track service learning program activities. Office Manager Florence Hebert will track AmeriCorps financial activities.

## Narratives

GREATER WORCESTER LAND TRUST was founded in 1987 to protect parks and open space in the city of Worcester. Serving the city and 13 nearby towns, GWLT has 360 members and 160 regular volunteers, owns more than 700 acres, holds CRs on 900 acres, and has helped ensure protection of 310 acres as state park and local conservation lands. GWLT partners with local town based trusts and recently merged with the West Boylston Land Trust, has collaborated with the White Oak Land Conservation Society and the Paxton Land Trust, is a fiduciary host for the Common Ground Land Trust of Leicester and Spencer, has executed pass-through projects in Spencer and East Brookfield, and is working on critical habitat in the town of Charlton. An extensive use of local and regional conservation planning documents has given them a strong track record with land acquisition grants. GWLT has a 12-member Board of Directors and a staff of 2. Colin M. J. Novick, Executive Director, will supervise 1 Land Steward and will track program and financial activities.

NASHUA RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION was established in 1969 to work for a healthy ecosystem with clean water and open spaces for human and wildlife communities in the Nashua River watershed. Serving 23 watershed communities in north central Massachusetts (and 8 in southern New Hampshire), NRWA has 1,000 members and more than 100 volunteers. For 40 years they have worked to establish a Nashua River Greenway along both sides of the Nashua River and its tributaries. To date they have helped to protect 85 miles of riverfront land and over 8,000 acres. Their environmental education program reaches over 11,000 youth and adults each year. NRWA has a 15-member volunteer Board of Directors, and 17 paid staff. Executive Director Elizabeth Ainsley Campbell will track AmeriCorps activities. Environmental Education Director Mary H. Marro will supervise 1 Service Learning Coordinator who will serve with NRWA and host groups. Land Programs and Outreach Director Alan Futterman will supervise 1 Regional Conservationist for NRWA and will facilitate service of 1 Land Steward for North County Land Trust.

SUDBURY VALLEY TRUSTEES was founded in 1953 to conserve land and protect wildlife habitat in the Concord, Assabet, and Sudbury river basins for the benefit of present and future generations.

## Narratives

Serving 36 towns, SVT has more than 3,300 members and 220 volunteers. SVT works closely with landowners, the SuAsCo Community Council (a consortium of watershed towns and citizens), local land trusts, and others to protect land within the region. They own more than 70 properties in 16 towns, a total of over 2,000 acres, and hold CRs on more than 1,400 acres. In addition to working on land protection projects they advise landowners on estate planning to protect family lands; collaborate on regional land protection planning and implementation; and carry out land stewardship. SVT's 19-member Board of Directors is comprised of volunteer members from the community plus the Executive Director. SVT provides office space for staff of the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition, an organization that works with local and regional land trusts across the state, and they will make administrative space available for the proposed project. There is a paid staff of 8. Director of Stewardship Laura Mattei will supervise 1 Land Steward, and track finances and program activities. Director of Land Protection Christa Collins will supervise 1 Outreach Coordinator who will work with SVT and host groups.

WILDLANDS TRUST OF SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS was established in 1973 to conserve land and preserve the natural heritage of southeastern Massachusetts. Serving 33 towns across 4 counties in southeastern Massachusetts, Wildlands Trust has 1,200 dues paying members and 25 volunteers. They work with residents and other organizations to permanently protect and provide stewardship for important habitats and landscapes; to help promote and build sustainable communities; and to sustain the rural character and quality of life enjoyed by the residents of southeastern Massachusetts. They own 4,200 acres and hold CRs on 2,000 acres. The Wildlands Trust is managed by a 19-member Board of Trustees and 4 volunteer officers. A staff of 8 carries out the day-to-day work of the organization. Director of Stewardship Jim Dehner will supervise 1 Land Steward. Development Director Sue Chamberlain will supervise 1 Outreach Coordinator. Director of Development Gabriella Silva will supervise 1 Regional Conservationist who will work with WTSM and host groups. Accountant Lisa Burch will report on financial and programmatic activities.

PLAN FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

## Narratives

The Boards of Directors and staff of each partner organization conduct an annual review of programmatic and financial activities, including success in raising financial support, the cost-effectiveness of programs, and the extent to which annual land protection goals have been supported through land projects, public education and outreach, and stewardship of protected lands. Evaluation of the AmeriCorps Massachusetts Lands Project will be incorporated into these annual reviews.

### PLAN FOR EFFECTIVE TECHNICAL, FINANCIAL, AND PROGRAMMATIC OVERSIGHT, TRAINING, AND ASSISTANCE

Mount Grace will organize weekly check-ins with all partners in the month before the project begins (during preparation & recruiting) and the first month of the program (during member orientation, and initiation of new projects). Check-ins will continue monthly after the first month. There will be a FAQs and help thread available on email to all partners. Corps members will also be encouraged to meet and exchange ideas with members serving with other partners with a view towards identifying training and technical assistance needs.

Before the program begins, staff from all program partners will participate in one technical-assistance training session focusing on program management and one training session on volunteer management. The program director will train at least one staff member in compiling program and financial information for the monthly reports. Mount Grace staff will receive training assistance and advice from MSA about administrative and programmatic aspects of AmeriCorps and community service programs in advance of training programs for partners. Consistent systems and forms utilized by all partners will assist in ensuring effective operation of the program.

### **Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy**

E1. Cost Effectiveness

Corporation Cost per MSY--\$13,000

### DIVERSE NON-FEDERAL SUPPORT AND SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

All program partners are 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations dependent on external financial support for

## Narratives

operating costs and land protection project funds. The program partners cumulatively raised \$8,500,000 in the past five year period from non-federal grant sources for these purposes. Each year, they raise \$3,300,000 collectively to support day-to-day operations and specific land protection projects from individuals, businesses, organizations, foundations, government, corporations, and community groups. Program partners are committed to allocating existing funds and assisting with fundraising to help cover costs of the program.

Mount Grace has raised \$1,054,000 through 45 non-federal grants over the past five years and \$540,000 this past year from 614 individual donors, businesses and other organizations. The trust raises private funds through personal meetings with donors, phone calls, annual appeal and membership letters, business sponsorships, and in-kind contributions. Mount Grace's funding is quite diverse including cash gifts, income from two endowments, program service fees, monthly credit card donations, stock gifts, family fund gifts, investment fund gifts, bequests, memorial gifts, honorary gifts, real estate gifts, sustainably managed forestry income, in-kind contributions, and interest from funds. The partners also leverage state and federal land protection and stewardship funds to protect lands valued at millions of dollars per year.

This is an attractive program to funders who would not typically fund partner organizations or programs individually but are interested in the regional scale of land trust collaboration which will create a broader scope of impacts at a statewide level. In initial discussions, the Jessie B. Cox Foundation has indicated interest in providing program funding and has requested a proposal for March 2010. The Land Trust Alliance is working to help secure foundation funding and is interested in seeing this model program replicated elsewhere in the nation. Partners will be contacting another twenty-six foundations identified as interested in this type of project (see Budget), and will raise additional matches from their membership, local supporters, and community foundations. Group grant requests will be sent to the Norcross Foundation, the Knapp Foundation and TechSoup to cover AmeriCorps project costs such as computers, GIS software, other supplies for use by AmeriCorps members, administrative personnel, and

## Narratives

staff supervision and training of members.

### E2. Budget Adequacy

The partners have estimated costs for travel, supplies, and office support for the AmeriCorps members based on their collective experience in land protection projects, stewardship, outreach, and volunteer engagement. The budget has been developed with careful attention to costs beyond basic member living allowances, health insurance, and other benefits. It covers member supervision and training, staff training, program and financial administration, members' travel for training and delivery of program activities to the community, supplies, performance measurement, and indirect costs. Start-up costs include one-time purchase of computers and other technology for members' use. Staff costs, provided as in-kind matches by the partners, are higher than in many AmeriCorps programs, because each member receives one-on-one supervision and development support from a professional land protection staff member from one of the partners. Please see the Budget Narrative for details.

### Evaluation Summary or Plan

N/A

### Amendment Justification

Not Applicable.

### Clarification Summary

Programmatic Clarification Items: Please make the following changes in the eGrants narrative field labeled "Clarification Summary".

(1) Please provide plans to ensure members gain an ethic of service, including opportunities for reflection. Describe plans to help members understand ethic of service when they are at multiple host sites.

Members will be exposed to the concept of an ethic of service during the interview process. The initial

## Narratives

week of orientation and training will include a formal presentation on community service and civic responsibility followed by time to reflect and a group discussion. Each of the quarterly day-long training sessions held during the remainder of the service year will allow the members to assemble as a corps and will include structured time specifically dedicated to reflection and discussion on the service experience and its impact on members' lives and communities. The Program Administrator will ensure that members are kept aware of service opportunities in the community at large and that they attend MSA sponsored service events together during the year. Members will also be involved in recruiting volunteers for the second year of the grant, and will be asked to create presentations bringing the ethic of service to the general public as part of that recruiting effort.

(2) Please provide more details regarding the training to be provided to supervisors and other partnership personnel engaged in the project to ensure their understanding of AmeriCorps policy and requirements.

The Program Administrator will run a mandatory technical assistance training session for all supervisory personnel before the beginning of the members' service. AmeriCorps policy and requirements will be the entire focus of the training. The Program Administrator will create monitoring tools such as monthly site monitoring questionnaires which will include components designed to ensure that all AmeriCorps requirements are met and that all policies are followed. The administrator can call meetings and institute further mandatory training for all partner staff to ensure compliance with federal requirements. The Administrator will conduct follow up site visits at all partner locations.

(3) Please explain what program oversight and technical assistance will be provided to sites after the first month other than the one monthly check-in call, FAQs and help thread. Please explain the help thread.



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The Program Administrator's monthly questionnaires will also cover member training, progress made towards program goals, how members are increasing partner capacity, members' reflections on service, best practices, and problems encountered during the month. The Administrator will make sure each partner's members are on pace to meet program goals and that each member is adequately supported by partner staff. The Administrator is empowered to make site visits and call meetings and teleconferences of partner staff to share best practices and address potential problems. The Administrator also monitors the help thread, which is simply an open email list on which all program supervisory staff can ask each other questions that arise about the program, and share concerns and best practices.

(4) Please clarify the role of the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition in this project.

The Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition traditionally offers advice and support to individual land trusts around Massachusetts. The Coalition will serve as an informal advisor for the first funding cycle while determining if it intends to join the current partners in the future. The Coalition will also serve as an informal ambassador to other regional trusts that may express interest in joining the program as full partners in future funding cycles.

For convenience, a summary of all the changes made to the Budget and Budget Narrative is below.

Budget Clarification Items:

Please make the following changes directly in the application budget and budget narrative in eGrants:

(1) Clarify role of Mount Grace Membership Coordinator.

## Narratives

The Mount Grace Membership Coordinator was the overall program coordinator for the Commonwealth Corps program at Mount Grace, which ran from 2008-2010 and serves as the model for the proposed AmeriCorps program. The Membership Coordinator will help orient and train the full time Project Administrator in addition to supervising multiple AmeriCorps members during the program year.

(2) The calculations for fringe benefits do not reconcile to the calculations for staff salaries, e.g. the MG Membership Coordinator fringe is calculated on \$5,832 of salary, but the salary proposed calculating on time is \$7,080. Please correct in all cases.

The numbers referred to in the above paragraph were in fact the total benefits packages of each staffer. The fringe benefit calculations are made by multiplying the total benefits package by the same % as the salary is multiplied by in section 1 A. That % represents the amount of time dedicated to the program. Fringe benefit calculations have been re-written to express fringe benefits as a % of total salary.

(3) Itemize travel expenses. Please clarify that staff travel is \$0.50 per mile. It is incorrectly listed as \$50 per mile in the first item of staff travel.

Corrected.

(4) Clarify need for program directors at each site to also receive a new computer.

Program directors at each site do not receive a new computer. There are 21 new computers: 1 for each member and 1 for the overall program manager, a new staff person added to run the program, who will need new equipment.

## Narratives

(5) Please clarify the number of GPS units and the number of copies of ArcGIS9 software. How will the four additional copies of the ArcGIS9 software be used if not on one of the 7 GPS Units?

ArcGIS software is mapping software usable on both a handheld GPS unit and a desktop or laptop computer. Seven of the ArcGIS9 licenses will be attached to the seven AmeriCorps member land stewards who will use the programs to gather data in the field and make maps in the office. The remaining four licenses will go to the four AmeriCorps member regional conservationists who will use them to map projects in the office, but will not be doing fieldwork.

Provide itemized costs for travel to CNCS-sponsored meetings.

Per a phone conversation with our Program Officer, It is our understanding that itemizing these costs is no longer required and that the \$2000 of CNCS funds earmarked for those meetings can be redistributed within the budget.

(7) Please confirm that criminal background checks will be conducted on all staff (18) and members (20) that are included in the program budget.

Criminal background checks will be conducted on all staff and members included in the program budget, adding costs of \$1140 ( $\$30 \times 38 \text{ people} = \$1140$ ) that will be paid through agency and partner funds.

(8) Clarify whether match funds have been secured. The budget reflects each line item as a "possible" match funding source.

## Narratives

Budget line has been edited to show \$179,113 secured in agency and partner funds dedicated to wages & benefits plus \$26,451 secured in donated software plus \$35,000 secured in agency funds. The balance of funding (\$128,999) is in anticipated grants or in agency funds if necessary.

### Continuation Changes

Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, in consultation with our MSA program officer and our first year partners proposes the following changes in our second year program.

Program Title: Since we wrote the original grant, we changed the program title from Massachusetts Lands Project to the Massachusetts Land Initiative for Tomorrow. We often shorten this title to read "AmeriCorps MassLIFT".

Service Duration: Our first program year started in October, as this was the earliest start date that we could manage with launching a new program; however, with initial program start-up no longer needed, we have decided to start the 2011-2012 program year in September in order to align more closely with the typical academic calendar and to give our corps members more time to complete their individual service projects and required 1,700 hours of service; to this end, we will now run an 11.5 months program from September through August.

Program: AmeriCorps MassLIFT anticipates no programmatic changes, but recognizes that some site partners' goals for their member(s) may shift as current goals are met over the project's first year. For instance, one of our site partners currently hosts an AmeriCorps member in a land steward position. The member is training community volunteers to monitor this small land trust's protected lands. With community volunteers trained to cover these tasks, this partner's goals for future members may shift away from land stewardship and towards regional conservation.

## Narratives

Performance Measures:

Enrollment and Retention: We enrolled 20 members for the 20 fulltime positions = 100% enrollment  
As of 1/13/2010 all 20 members continue to serve = 100% retention

Community Outcomes: We confirmed with MSA the possibility of engaging a smaller number of community volunteers while meeting our original goals for volunteer hours (8,000 hours). A shift, from our first year goal of 1,800 volunteers to 1,400 volunteers will enable our partners to cultivate closer relationships with highly motivated community members and to facilitate longer-term volunteer commitments. It also gives our members more flexibility to encourage volunteer participation in multiple service learning events and to enhance the volunteers' knowledge of and commitment to a given protected area.

Though not a change in our program's performance measures, we note that our members facilitate a broad range of community service learning activities. Trails and community gardens are only two examples of the many types of service learning events led by our members. We consider the value of alternative activities base on the interests and needs of the communities served by our program.

A measure that we did not include in our initial grant but will track in our reporting is the number of community members educated about conservation through our members' presentations and other outreach (e.g. personal meetings and tabling at community events). The people reached and educational impacts of our members' service exceed the number of community members involved in our member-led service learning activities.

## Narratives

Budget:

Personnel - We have increased the personnel expenses, the in kind contribution of MassLIFT partners and their affiliates, because our second year budget includes staff that were supervising members in the program's first year without accounting for the additional salaries, FICA, and fringe benefits. The Mount Grace personnel expenses also includes slight raises in pay.

Staff Travel - Changes in this item acknowledge more travel by the program director and less by site partner staff.

Supplies - At this point in our first year of the program, all of our partners anticipate continuing to host AmeriCorps members. Their primary supply costs (computers, software, GPS units and cameras) were covered in the first year.

Member Training - We increased the budget for member training in recognition of the value of a longer orientation. Our partners are spread across the state, and the costs of travel limit the number of times that we get the members together for trainings. A longer orientation (four days), allows more time up front to establish an esprit de corps and provide additional training in skills common to all the members.

Other Program Operating Costs - We anticipate few changes in staff, and we understand that our first year CORI's for staff will carry over for the second year of our program.

Living allowance - We have increased our member living allowances according to the stipend increases made by CNCS.

## Narratives

Health Care - We over-estimated the Network health care rates in our first year (\$180 per month) and have corrected our second year estimate to an amount slightly more than the first year actual rate (\$150 from \$139.21 in the first year).

FY 11 Continuation Clarification:

Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, Application ID 11AC125278 This application is under consideration for a grant in the amount of \$260,000, 20 Member Service Years (MSYs) and 20 member positions.

Dates: We pushed the date back a week but kept the duration at 11.5 weeks. This change fits with a longer recruitment period and accommodations for orientation at Harvard Forest.

Budget Clarification Items:

1) Please revise your budget to equal the funding and MSY amount listed above.

We have lowered our program's CNCS grant from \$266,000 to \$260,000 by shifting \$5,701 of the \$10,708 that we had budgeted for members' health care from our CNCS grant to our match. We also lowered the administrative/indirect costs (Section III) from \$13,292 to \$12,933.

(2) C. Staff and Member Travel: Please provide break out of travel to CNCS-Sponsored meetings.

We included \$535 in the travel budget for the program manager to attend a CNCS-Sponsored meeting. We are budgeting \$200 for transportation, \$235 for accommodations, and \$100 for meals for one

## Narratives

person.

### (3) I. Other Program Operating Costs:

- Criminal history checks will be conducted on all members and employees on the grant. Only a portion of our corps members and staff have recurring access to vulnerable populations. FBI checks will be conducted on all of these members and staff. Therefore, we increased our match budget by adding \$1,000 for FBI screening and fingerprinting (We estimated these extra costs at \$50 per person X 10 members + 10 staff).

- We added \$960 in office expenses that were not included in the previous budget submitted to CNCS. This amount covers the monthly cell phone costs for the program manager.

### (4) Please provide source of matching funds.

Each of our 2011 -- 2012 partners will pay the Grantee a per MSY fee of \$6,300 to cover their share of the program match, they will also submit to the Grantee records for member expenses totaling \$1,770 per member. All of these funds will come from private sources and are included in the partners' annual budgets. The budget section of our egrants gives a breakout of our partners' expected in-kind contributions and funds contributed through program fee's and cash receipts. It does not include the \$55,630 in administrative indirect fees (Section III).

Note: Three of our FY 10 partners will not renew their AmeriCorps positions (one of two positions in the case of NRWA) due to budgetary constraints. We are in the process of establishing new host sites for these three positions. The additional funds from new new partners for our FY 11 match would equal



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\$44,336 inkind + cash.

### Programmatic Clarification Items:

No programmatic clarification items identified. Please see narrative below for requested changes made to our performance measures.

### Performance Measure Clarification Items:

Please make the following changes in the Performance Measures screens in eGrants:

Measuring Member Outcomes Performance Measure: This measure has been removed.

Measuring Land Stewardship Activities Performance Measure: No clarification needed. - See requested changes made in egrants and explained below.

Measuring New Land Protection Projects Performance Measure: No clarification needed. -- See requested changes made in egrants and explained below.

Measuring Community Outcomes Performance Measure: No clarification needed. - See requested changes made in egrants and explained below.

### Requested Changes to Performance Measures:

Our first five months of implementing this new AmeriCorps program have revealed useful changes to make in the language of our grant's land protection and land stewardship performance measures. The following changes that we would like to make better accommodate the broad scope of service activities

## Narratives

needed to achieve effective progress towards our program's land protection and stewardship goals "within different communities, based on local needs." The changes we propose support the following end outcomes articulated in our grant:

-for land stewardship - "ensuring the conservation values of protected lands continue to be provided to society", and

- for land protection - "Through increased efforts for the initiation and implementation of land protection projects, important lands across Massachusetts will be set aside from development. These lands will continue to be used in perpetuity for agriculture, forestry, recreation, wildlife, and water supply, and they will provide ecological, economic, aesthetic, and spiritual benefits to Massachusetts citizens into the distant future."

I. Land Stewardship Activities Performance Measure: We want to broaden the scope of stewardship reports produced by our Members to enhance our program's effectiveness in achieving the overall goal of protecting "public interests" by "maintaining and improving the conditions of conservation lands."

II. New Land Protection Projects Performance Measure: As more projects are identified and initiated with the help of our members, the needs of our partners and communities shift to advancing projects towards completion. It is important to include project implementation with project initiation in this performance measure to ensure our program's responsiveness to communities' evolving and varied land conservation needs.

Measuring Community Outcomes Performance Measure:

## Narratives

Feedback from our members and partners encourages us to request slight changes in the outputs associated with our two performance measures for strengthening communities.

I. Decrease the number of volunteer hours from 8,000 7,500: Outreach and education events such as exhibits at community fairs and farmers markets, nature hikes on or near school grounds and residential areas, and presentations at senior centers and in classrooms have proven effective ways to cultivate new relations with community members and groups that don't have conservation as their primary focus. Such events do not contribute directly to our target numbers for community volunteers and service hours, but they achieve other important program goals: 1) They support our program's goal of increasing awareness of the public benefits of conserved lands, 2) they promote community awareness and enjoyment of local parks, farms, community gardens, and natural areas open to the public, and 3) they can serve as an important first step towards engaging community members in conservation service. With these benefits in mind we have slightly reduced our target numbers for the community outreach position to facilitate these Members' efforts to connect with a greater number of community members and encourage their interest in land protection and stewardship.

II. Change the language of our target to establish and support volunteer conservation boards to include helping existing volunteer conservation committees carry out their work. Our program will be more responsive to local land protection needs and opportunities if our AmeriCorps members have the option to either assist volunteer conservation boards/committees with their conservation planning and projects, or help towns start up new committees and conservation initiatives. Providing technical and community organizing assistance to volunteer conservation leaders on both new and ongoing municipal boards/ committees is important to our goal of increasing the pace of land protection in the communities served by our program.

## Performance Measures

### SAA Characteristics

- AmeriCorps Member Population - None
- Geographic Focus - Rural
- Geographic Focus - Urban
- Encore Program

### Priority Areas

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy Futures                      |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental Stewardship | <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans and Military Families       |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Opportunity                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                                |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> |

Grand Total of all MSYs entered for all Priority Areas      20

### Service Categories

At-risk Ecosystems Improvement      Primary       Secondary

## Measuring Community Outcomes

**Service Category:** At-risk Ecosystems Improvement

**Measure Category:** Strengthening Communities

### Strategy to Achieve Results

**Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)**

Through service-learning projects, workshops, and training programs, AmeriCorps members will engage volunteers in service to the community in short-term activities such as establishing new community gardens, conducting inventories of species on properties, cleaning up parks and trails, monitoring water quality, and certifying vernal pools. Members will also recruit and train community volunteers for longer-range commitments such as trail construction and maintenance; land stewardship including baseline documentation and easement monitoring; and involvement with land-protection organizations and committees.

### Results

**Result: End Outcome**

Volunteers who participated in land stewardship outreach programs or received technical assistance as volunteers on town boards or local conservation organizations will continue to be engaged in community service to conservation, and there will be increased levels of public support for

**Result: End Outcome**

conservation activities and initiatives. As a result, conservation lands will be better able to provide society with ecological services such as water, wildlife, agricultural and forest products, and recreational opportunities as a result of effective ongoing monitoring and management

Indicator: The number of municipal conservation committees (e.g. conservation commissions,

Target: 12 new volunteer land conservation committees (e.g. conservation commissions, open space committees, and agricultural commissions) established over 3 years in Massachusetts cities and towns, and/or 12 project assists to new and ongoing committees ove

Target Value: 12

Instruments: Town clerks records of municipal conservation committees

Membership and support records and annual reports maintained by conservation organizations

Stewardship databases of land trusts, conservation commissions, and other holders of conservation lands documenting schedules and status of stewardship monitoring and management

PM Statement: Training and project facilitation will empower many volunteers with the skills and confidence to initiate conservation projects, take on continuing responsibility for local land stewardship, and serve on conservation-related boards and committees for land trusts, government, and community organizations. The community will benefit from increased public awareness and volunteer commitments to conservation, ultimately leading to success in meeting long-term land-protection and stewardship goals for the local area and for the state as a whole.

Prev. Yrs. Data

**Result: End Outcome**

open space committees, and agricultural commissions) established and filled by

**Result: End Outcome**

volunteers /or projects of these volunteer conservation committees assisted.

**Result: Output**

Each year the program will engage 1,400 community and school volunteers in 7,500 hours of service

to land protection

Indicator: community volunteers recruited

Target: 1,400 community and student volunteers contributing 7,500 hours of volunteer service

Target Value: 1400

Instruments: Training logs and participant lists for each program and volunteer activity.  
Town board lists

PM Statement: Training and project facilitation will empower many volunteers with the skills and confidence to initiate conservation projects, take on continuing responsibility for local land stewardship, and serve on conservation-related boards and committees for land trusts, government, and community organizations. The community will benefit from increased public awareness and volunteer commitments to conservation, ultimately leading to success in meeting long-term land-protection and stewardship goals for the local area and for the state as a whole.

Prev. Yrs. Data

**Result: Intermediate Outcome**

Each year, community volunteers will experience satisfaction with their service and feel that they have

learned skills and obtained information that helped them carry out their volunteer activities.

Indicator: Number of volunteers indicating that they felt adequately trained and prepared to do

Target: 80% of the surveyed community volunteers were satisfied with their volunteer experience and  
felt adequately trained and prepared to do their service.

Target Value: 80%

Instruments: Surveys of participants in stewardship workshops and other programs to determine their satisfaction with their service and training

PM Statement: Training and project facilitation will empower many volunteers with the skills and confidence to initiate conservation projects, take on continuing responsibility for local land stewardship, and serve on conservation-related boards and committees for land trusts, government, and community organizations. The community will benefit from increased public awareness and volunteer commitments to conservation, ultimately leading to success in meeting long-term land-protection and stewardship goals for the local area and for the state as a whole.

Prev. Yrs. Data

**Result: Intermediate Outcome**

the service they carried out

**Measuring New Land Protection Projects**

**Service Category:** At-risk Ecosystems Improvement

**Measure Category:** Needs and Service Activities

**Strategy to Achieve Results**

**Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)**

Through workshops, presentations, and one-on-one contacts, and through examination of GIS, maps, and other documents, AmeriCorps members will facilitate the identification and initiation of new land protection projects in the communities being served. Members will explain land protection options to landowners, municipal boards and local conservation organizations; will assist owners who are interested in exploring conservation options for their lands; will seek suggestions of potential land conservation projects from civic groups such as community gardeners, scouts, and church groups; and will provide technical assistance to local organizations that need help in initiating new land projects.

**Results**

**Result: Output**

Each year, AmeriCorps members will advance the pace of conservation in the communities they serve by assisting with the initiation and/or implementation of at least 45 land protection projects in the communities they serve.

Indicator: The number of new land protection projects initiated in project communities as a result

Target: 45 land protection projects

Target Value: 45

Instruments: Individual AmeriCorps members' activity logs documenting meetings and programs, mapping and database work, information obtained, and progress toward project initiation, implementation, and completion. Land trusts databases of land protection projects with documentation of background information and sources.

PM Statement: Through increased efforts for the initiation and implementation of land protection projects, important lands across Massachusetts will be set aside from development. These lands will continue to be used in perpetuity for agriculture, forestry, recreation, wildlife, and water supply, and they will provide ecological, economic, aesthetic, and spiritual benefits to Massachusetts citizens into the distant future.

Prev. Yrs. Data



**Result: Output**

of member activities

**Result: Intermediate Outcome**

Each year, outreach to landowners and community groups by AmeriCorps members will result in at least 45 landowners having an improved understanding of conservation options they can use to protect their land.

Indicator: beneficiaries

Target: 45 landowners report that their understanding of land protection options is improved as a result of AmeriCorps members' presentations and outreach.

Target Value: 45

Instruments: Program evaluations to be completed by participants in workshops will include a specific question about how well the program helped improve landowners' understanding of conservation options

Members will maintain records of conversations/written communications with landowners, including responses to a specific question about the landowners' level of increased understanding of conservation options available to them for their lands

PM Statement: Through increased efforts for the initiation and implementation of land protection projects, important lands across Massachusetts will be set aside from development. These lands will continue to be used in perpetuity for agriculture, forestry, recreation, wildlife, and water supply, and they will provide ecological, economic, aesthetic, and spiritual benefits to Massachusetts citizens into the distant future.

Prev. Yrs. Data

**Result: End Outcome**

Over time, measurable successes will be evident in an increase in the acreage of protected farms, community gardens, greenways, and forests, and in a high level of public support for and participation in local conservation activities. Local conservation lands across Massachusetts will provide society with ecological services such as water, wildlife, agricultural and forest products, and recreational opportunities.

Indicator: The amount of open space that needs to be protected from development

Target: Land protection is an ongoing community need. The long-term target is effective progress toward meeting overall goals for land protection within different communities, based on local needs and planning. There is no single outcome that indicates that

Target Value: 135

Instruments: Conservation restrictions, Agricultural Preservation Restrictions, and deeds documenting fee ownership by conservation organizations and government agencies at county Registries of Deeds

Agency and land trust data bases of land protection goals and accomplishments over time

PM Statement: Through increased efforts for the initiation and implementation of land protection projects, important lands across Massachusetts will be set aside from development. These lands will continue to be used in perpetuity for agriculture, forestry, recreation, wildlife, and water supply, and they will provide ecological, economic, aesthetic, and spiritual benefits to Massachusetts citizens into the

**Result: End Outcome**

distant future.

Prev. Yrs. Data

**Measuring Land Stewardship Activities**

**Service Category:** At-risk Ecosystems Improvement

**Measure Category:** Needs and Service Activities

**Strategy to Achieve Results**

**Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)**

AmeriCorps Land Stewards will carry out baseline surveys to document boundaries and conditions on protected lands, and monitoring to identify status and changes. They will prepare baseline and monitoring reports documenting the results of the surveys. They will notify land trust staff or property managers about management concerns or possible violations of CRs identified on monitored properties through the surveys.

**Results**

**Result: Output**

Each year AmeriCorps members serving as land stewards will complete 112 land stewardship reports, including baseline documentation, natural resource inventories, ecological stewardship plans, and monitoring surveys, with reports filed.

Indicator: The number of stewardship surveys and reports completed each year

Target: 112 total land stewardship reports completed with reports filed

Target Value: 112

Instruments: Land trust and conservation organization files containing completed stewardship reports

PM Statement: Through increased efforts for ongoing land stewardship, lands that have been set aside from development across Massachusetts will remain undeveloped. These conservation lands will continue to be used in perpetuity for agriculture, forestry, recreation, wildlife, and water supply, and they will provide ecological, economic, aesthetic, and spiritual benefits to Massachusetts citizens into the distant future.

Prev. Yrs. Data

**Result: Intermediate Outcome**

Baseline documentation indicating properties' conditions and all other stewardship reports are prepared in accordance with the guidelines in Standards and Practices of the Land Trust Alliance and in accordance with IRS Code 170(h).

Indicator: Land trust and conservation organization files containing completed stewardship

Target: Signed affidavits attest to accuracy of all baseline surveys completed.

Target Value: 100%

Instruments: Affidavits held on file at land trusts and conservation organizations with copies provided to

**Result: Intermediate Outcome**

reports and affidavits signed by all parties needed to meet the guidelines in Standards  
landowners.

PM Statement: Through increased efforts for ongoing land stewardship, lands that have been set aside from development across Massachusetts will remain undeveloped. These conservation lands will continue to be used in perpetuity for agriculture, forestry, recreation, wildlife, and water supply, and they will provide ecological, economic, aesthetic, and spiritual benefits to Massachusetts citizens into the distant future.

Prev. Yrs. Data

**Result: Intermediate Outcome**

and Practices of the Land Trust Alliance and the IRS Code 170(h).

**Result: End Outcome**

Timely stewardship activities result in maintained and improved conditions on conservation lands, ensuring that the values for which the lands were initially protected continue to be provided to society.

Natural resource inventories and ecological stewardship plans help ensure timely and sound stewardship activities. The baseline and monitoring report allows land trusts to carry out future annual monitoring in the context of the historical conservation values of each property, meeting their legal obligations under IRS Code 170(h)

Indicator: Continuing annual monitoring reports will be prepared for each property to meet the in

Target: Stewardship of protected lands is an ongoing community need. The long-term target is effective progress toward meeting overall stewardship goals by monitoring all the lands that trusts undertake to protect. 100% of properties monitored by AmeriCorp

Target Value: 100%

Instruments: Land trust and conservation organization files containing completed stewardship reports and annual monitoring reports

PM Statement: Through increased efforts for ongoing land stewardship, lands that have been set aside from development across Massachusetts will remain undeveloped. These conservation lands will continue to be used in perpetuity for agriculture, forestry, recreation, wildlife, and water supply, and they will provide ecological, economic, aesthetic, and spiritual benefits to Massachusetts citizens into the distant future.

Prev. Yrs. Data

**Result: End Outcome**

perpetuity standard required of land trusts.

## Required Documents

**Document Name**

**Status**

Evaluation

Not Applicable

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable